

REF ID: A6577
12 June 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: SB/RR

SUBJECT : Uniate Church in the Ukrainian SSR

SOURCE : AECASSOWARY/29 (usually reliable) from a High Official in the Ukrainian Catholic (Uniate) Church (probably reliable)

PLACE OBTAINED: Rome, Italy

DATE OBTAINED : 23 May 1967

1. Since the visit earlier this year of Soviet President, Nikolay V. Podgorny, with Pope Paul VI, approximately 70 Uniate Churches have been reestablished in the Western Ukraine. Whenever a new parish starts to function, a verbal report is made to local Soviet authorities that Catholic services are being conducted in a given church (or other building). The authorities merely verbally acknowledge the fact that the report was made, and remind the individual reporting that the Uniate Church is outlawed in the Soviet Union and, therefore, cannot be formally registered. To date, the authorities have not interfered with any of the services, and in fact, have shown an unprecedented tolerance toward individuals involved.

2. Soviet authorities have indicated that they are aware of the existence of "private" Ukrainian Catholic "monasteries" in Lvov (i.e., former monks and nuns living in small groups in private homes, where although they wear civilian garb and work in public institutions, they continue to practice their religious vows in their respective small communities), and that they have no objection so long as the individuals involved do not profess their faith and otherwise act in public.

3. Information similar to the above recently was obtained from a Soviet Ukrainian official at the United Nations and from a West European traveller to the Soviet Union. The U. N. official suggested to the source with whom he spoke that while the atmosphere between Rome and the Soviet Union was still cordial, Ukrainian Catholics in the Ukraine should take over the Latin Rite Polish churches in Lvov and register as "the Eastern Church" rather than Uniate or Ukrainian Catholic, as the legal existence of the latter two names will never again

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be permitted in the Soviet Union. This suggestion on the part of the Soviet tends to add credence to the belief in Ukrainian emigre circles that the Soviets are seeking a compromise to Vatican demands for reestablishment of the Catholic Church in the Ukraine. The U. N. official asked the source with whom he spoke whether the source knew if Podgorny also met with Cardinal Yosif *Slipyj when Podgorny was in Rome. This would indicate that there might have been a meeting between the two and that the Soviets were checking for any leaks about the meeting. The Soviet official is aware that the source is close to Ukrainian Catholic authorities and that she has had contact with Cardinal Slipyj in the past.

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SB/CAO

*Cardinal Slipyj, released in February 1963 by the Soviets after 18 years of imprisonment and permitted to come to Rome, was Archbishop of Lvov and the Metropolitan of the Uniate Church in the Ukraine before its formal liquidation by Moscow in 1945.